

IV

SOME CUSTOMS OF THE PELEW ISLANDERS

WE have seen that the state of society and religion among the Pelew Islanders in modern times presents several points of similarity to the condition of the peoples about the Eastern Mediterranean in antiquity.¹ Here I propose briefly to call attention to certain other customs of the Pelew Islanders which may serve to illustrate some of the institutions discussed in this volume.

§ i. *Priests dressed as Women*

In the Pelew Islands it often happens that a goddess chooses in the a man, not a woman, for her minister and inspired mouthpiece. Pelew When that is so, the favoured man is thenceforth regarded and m, ^ 1 w ^ is treated as a woman. He wears female attire, he carries a piece of inspired by gold on his neck, he labours like a woman in the taro fields, and he a f ^ odd ^ plays his new part so well that he earns the hearty contempt of his f (. n ^ i a j e fellows.- The pretended change of sex under the inspiration of a attire and female spirit perhaps explains a custom widely spread among is treated savages, in accordance with which some men dress as women and ^ oman act as women through life. These unsexed creatures often, perhaps This pre- generally, profess the arts of sorcery and healing, they communicate ^ ^ d with spirits, and are regarded sometimes with awe and sometimes se ^ ufidor with contempt, as beings of a higher or lower order than common the inspira- folk. Often they are dedicated and trained to their vocation ti ^ on of a from childhood. Effeminate sorcerers or priests of this sort are sp ^ ^ y found among the Sea Dyaks of Borneo,*⁵ the Bugis of South explain a

¹ Above, pp. 204 sf/f/.

³²⁻³⁵ > Captain Rodney Muncly, *Nar-*

² J. Kubary, "Die Religion clcr ralvvc of Events in ttorneo and Fchuurr," in A. Bastian's *AUcrlei aits Celebes from the Journals of James J'YV',v« IIIII Menschenkuude* (Berlin, Brooke ^ IEst/,y Rajah of Sarawak SKS.S), i. 35. (London, 1848), ii. 65 sy. ; Charles

• C. A. L. M. Schwancr, *JBorttM Brooke, Ten Years in Sarawak* (Lon- (Amsterdam, 1853), i. 186 ; M. T. II. don, 1866), ii. 280; II. Low, *Perdaer, Jtthnotfra/i/iist'he Heschrijving Sarawak* (London, 1848), pp. 174-177 ; tier *Dajiiks* (Zalt-BomnicI, 1870), pp. The Bishop of Labuan, "On the Wild

